



# News Release

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## **NEW DATA SHOW 91 PERCENT OF CALIFORNIA WOMEN DON'T SMOKE**

SACRAMENTO— California adults are smoking at record low rates, with women smoking far less than men, according to new data released today by the California Department of Health Services. Adult smoking prevalence declined to 13.3 percent in 2006, down from 14.0 percent in 2005. For the first time since the state began tracking smoking prevalence, rates among California women decreased to a single digit, 9.1 percent in 2006, compared with 11.1 percent in 2005.

“While fewer Californians smoke and the rate continues to decrease every year,” said California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Kim Belshé, “it is encouraging to see that women are making notably great strides to live tobacco-free.”

Smoking among California women has decreased by 54 percent since 1988 — an unprecedented decline. California’s new prevalence data bring the state within reach of the national Healthy People 2010 objective to reduce smoking rates to 12 percent.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Health Care Reform proposal calls for expanding access to smoking education and cessation services to help an additional 40,000 California smokers quit. In addition, the proposal seeks to double the rate of smokers using health insurance cessation benefits from an estimated 6 percent to 12 percent annually.

“Disease prevention, health promotion and wellness are the cornerstones of Governor Schwarzenegger’s health care reforms,” Belshé said.

“California’s 10-year downward trend in adult smoking gives us every reason to think the state’s smoking rates will soon drop below the national goal of 12 percent,” said State Public Health Officer Dr. Mark Horton. “California’s secondhand smoke policies, comprehensive tobacco education programs and the price of cigarettes have all played a role in making people think twice about smoking.”

Smoking among men remained statistically unchanged at 17.5 percent in 2006, compared with 17.0 percent in 2005. Smoking rates among all adults ages 18 to 24 continued to be the highest of any age group in California at 19.4 percent in 2006, an increase from 18.0 percent in 2005.

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“Californians deserve credit and praise for changing their behavior and attitudes about tobacco use,” said Horton.

Californians who want to quit smoking or are thinking about it can call 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887), a free, professional and confidential telephone service offered to anyone living in the state. Quitting assistance and information is offered in a variety of languages, including English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Korean. Specialized counselors for teens, the hearing impaired and users of chew and smokeless tobacco products are also available.

The California Tobacco Control Program is funded by Proposition 99, a voter-mandated tobacco tax established in 1988. The program is the nation’s longest running and most comprehensive anti-tobacco program. California’s 2006 adult smoking prevalence is from the combined Behavior Risk Factor Survey and the California Adult Tobacco Survey.

Charts illustrating the 2006 smoking prevalence data are available for download at [www.dhs.ca.gov/tobacco](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/tobacco). To learn more about California’s program, visit [www.TobaccoFreeCA.com](http://www.TobaccoFreeCA.com).